CLIMATE NEGOTIATIONS BONN MARCH-APRIL 2009 NGO NEWSLETTER

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IMPOVERISHED ISSUE

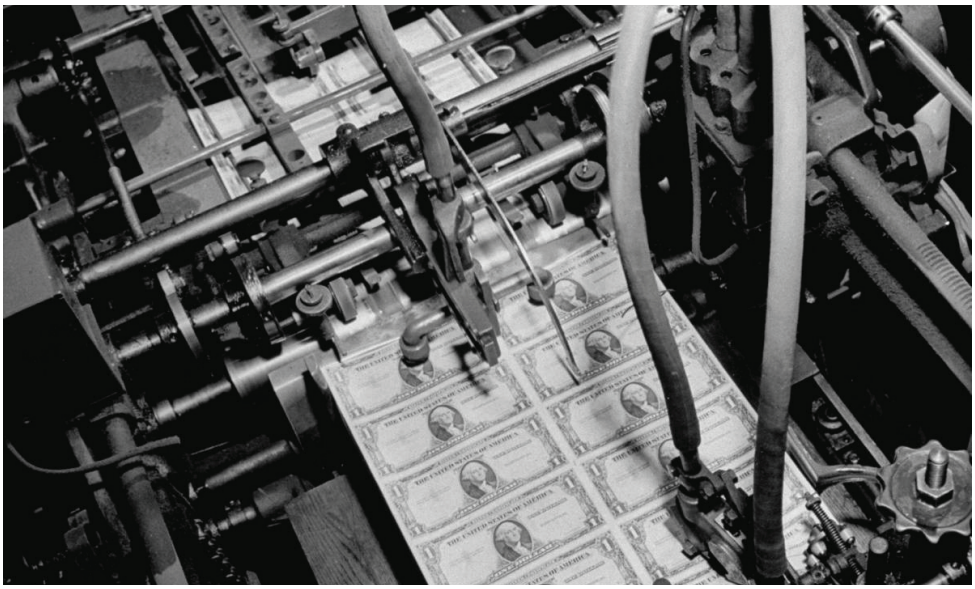
Eco has been published by Non-Governmental Environmental Groups at major international conferences since the Stockholm Environment Conference in 1972. This issue is produced co-operatively by CAN groups attending the climate negotiations in Bonn, March-April 2009.

Ten Reasons Why Saudi Arabia is not Equal to Tuvalu

ECO has noticed that there has been some confusion within some contact groups, such as those on adaptation and on shared vision. Saudi Arabia has repeatedly compared itself to the poorest and most vulnerable countries, when trying for example to get a chunk of the adaptation fund, and claims that it has the same responsibilities and obligations as a country like Tuvalu. ECO would like to help push the process forward by highlighting the ten reasons (there are many more) why Saudi Arabia is not equal to Tuvalu (other than the fact that one is serious about fighting climate change and the other is not).

1. Saudis GDP/capita is 24,000 US dollars, while Tuvalu's is 1,600 US dollars (so an average Saudi Arabian is 15 times richer than an average Tuvaluan);
2. One country's GDP is over 25,000 times the other's (guess which is which);
3. Saudi Arabia's total emissions are 266,000,000 tons annually of CO_2 (ranking among the highest 19 countries), while Tuvalu's are so insignificant that it is not even listed;
4. Saudi Arabia is holding the world to ransom, Tuvalu is being held to ransom by the world;
5. Saudi Arabia's chances of being submerged beneath the sea and ceasing to exist any time soon are really really low
6. Tuvalu is in AOSIS, Saudi Arabia has oases;
7. Saudi Arabia makes its living from of fossil fuels, Tuvalu is dying from fossil fuels;
8. One country is swimming in oil, the other is swimming because of oil;
9. One country's oil will run out one day, the other's soil will run out one day;
10. One makes a *much* better holiday destination – at least for now.

So, one of these two countries is among the poorest and most vulnerable and needs support: which one?



Consensus generation mechanism

Big Business to Cough up?

Breaking news: EU finds way to transform big business into charity organizations!

ECO has heard that some EU and Japanese experts have found the magical solution to finance mitigation in developing countries without having to look deeper into their treasuries.

These two parties have often referred to a UNFCCC study stating that 86% of global investments and financial flows come from to the private sector. Indeed, it is true that most of the investments for mitigation in developing countries will happen through private sector activities. For instance, most of the wind turbines will be built by the private sector.

But ECO does not understand why some of these experts think that the incremental costs which result from mitigation actions will also be paid for by the private sector. They argue that because of this less public financing will be required from the North to cover its fair share of these incremental costs of mitigation in developing countries.

Let's make this clear: private sector power companies will NEVER bear the incremental cost of building wind turbines instead of cheap coal plants. It would be a historical first if the private sector were to take on such costs and thus reduce its profit margin: at least without suitable regulation to ensure that either targets are met, or external costs – such as climate change impacts – are internalized, itself a complicated issue.

Without public support from developed countries, in the end it will be the households in developing countries which will pay for the incremental costs of mitigation action, either directly through higher power prices or indirectly through higher taxes to allow their government to introduce a RES support system (e.g. feed in tariff).

ECO concludes that those EU and Japanese experts are just seeking a "cheap" excuse to commit to less public financing from the north to the south. We just wanted to let everybody else know: we know, so you know.

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REDD Hot and Ready to Roll

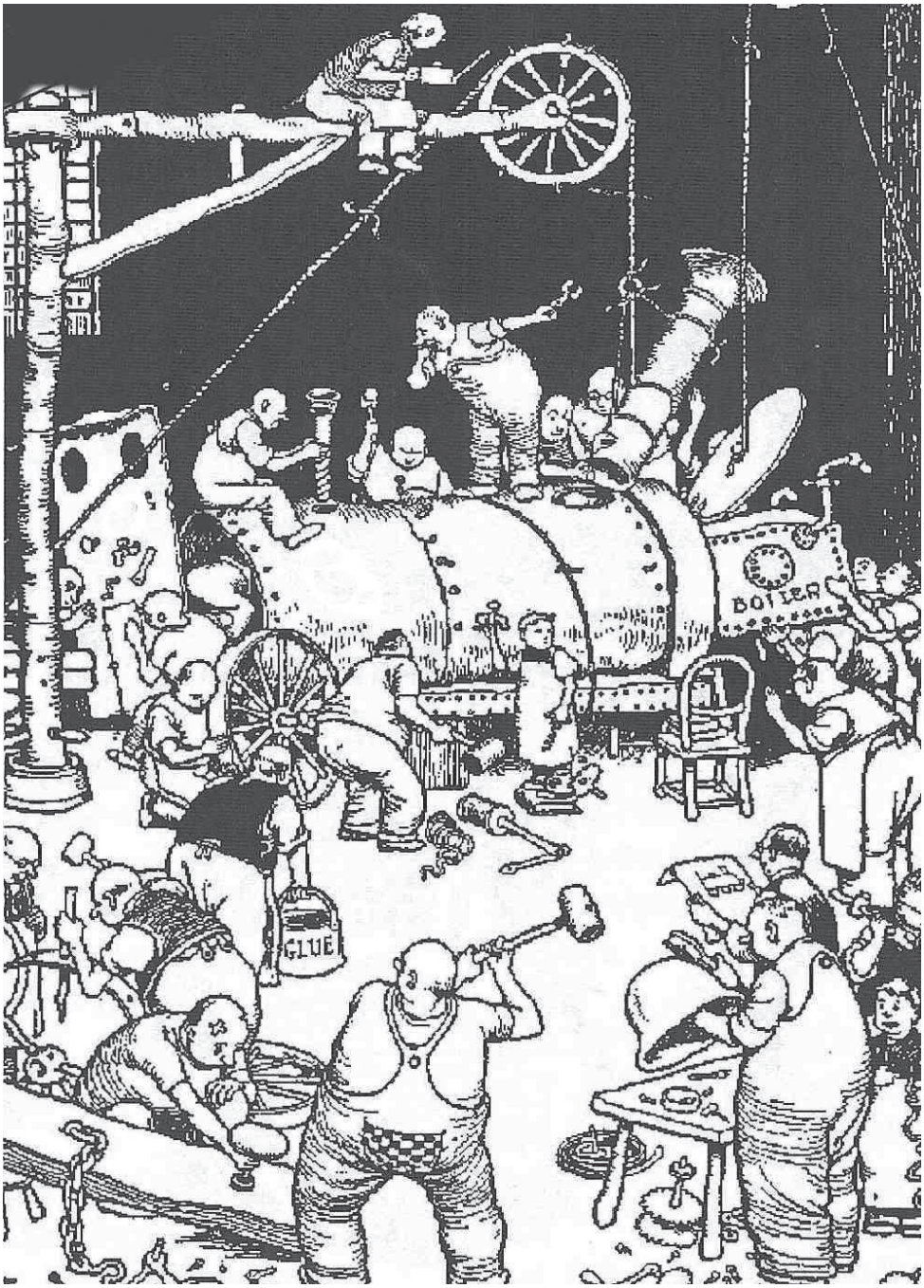
Avid fans may remember ECO's call in Posnan and last week in Bonn for parties to remember that forests are more than inanimate lumps of carbon: people and wildlife live there. And when Parties finally got their much awaited chance on Saturday to focus on REDD, ECO was pleased to hear the flood of references to biodiversity, Indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights, and the Poznan "s" in the context of REDD.

From Ecuador to the EU, many parties recognised the importance of these so-called "co-benefits" – including the conservation of biodiversity, water supply and food products. And the Poznan "s" was included in many of the statements, with parties – including Tuvalu and Norway – affirming the importance of REDD recognising and ensuring the rights of local communities and Indigenous peoples. This was particularly inspiring from Australia, who had just the day before announced its support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Thanks Aussies, better late than never!

Some of the challenges of achieving effective REDD programmes were also noted – with no less than 5 parties explicitly referring to the importance of governance and almost all parties reaffirming the need for support for capacity building. The US also recognised that the challenges cannot all be tackled through actions in developing countries, stating that demand side elements must form part of the efforts to address deforestation; sounds like a no-brainer, but a piece of the REDD puzzle largely overlooked to date in the UNFCCC discussions.

Of course the devil is in the detail, so unpacking these elements is important. A few suggestions from ECO are: what actions are needed to address challenges of governance – within countries and in the international system? How might demand side elements be tackled through the UNFCCC? How can the recommendations from the Ad-Hoc Technical Experts Group of the CBD and the UNFCCC be applied to a REDD system? How can the rights of local communities and Indigenous peoples be ensured?

Good governance and broad environmental integrity in REDD are crucial to the long-term success of sustainably reducing forest emissions, and are thus more than covered by the mandate of the UNFCCC. ECO leaves Parties with the fun task of elaborating how these elements can be effectively anchored and implemented in REDD. Go get 'em!



NAMA construction team at work

T-shirts!

The youth have acquired three hundred more "How old will you be in 2050?" T-shirts, which will be available from the 350.org booth today and tomorrow. Until 4pm Monday, due to limited supply and extremely high demand, shirts will only be available to pink-badge holders, on two conditions:

- That you wear it in Wednesday's closing plenary, and
- Only one shirt per national delegation.

After 4pm, any leftover shirts will be made available to anyone who wants them.

Suggested donation, to help the recoup, our cost is €10, Northern delegates are welcome to donate more!

Students Lead the Way

During CAN's intervention in Saturday's Contact Group on Adaptation, a voluntary contribution to the Adaptation Fund – a bag of coins and bills – was presented to the Chair. The donation of €131 was collected by three hundred students of Marienschule high school in Euskirchen, following a Climate Crisis presentation the school detailing the catastrophic conditions faced by today's youth if the Copenhagen agreement should fall short.

These generous, empathetic young people have spontaneously set an example for all of us. We call on Annex 1 Parties to follow suit by contributing generously towards the urgent adaptation needs of the most vulnerable countries, through either the LDC or Adaptation Fund. These students contributed perhaps 2%-3% of their allowances. If, for example, the US gave a comparable proportion of its GDP, it would stand in stark contrast to its complete lack of contributions to date. The youth's perception of the problems and the need for immediate financial remedies, is swift and intuitive. They do not talk and deliberate endlessly. They 'get it'. They give from their pockets and their hearts. Learn from your children. Match their wisdom and generosity.